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PS 3523
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1913

"The Little Star."**C A S T.**

Ferdinand Scheuster-----A cripple.

Mansfield Muggs-----A stage veteran.

Henry Dalton-----A young playwright.

Robert Dalton-----His Father, a banker.

Banquo Beamish-----Manager of Folly Theatre.

Florence Livingston-----The leading lady of Folly Theatre.

Hilda-----Scheuster's daughter.
"The Little Star."

Robert Dalton and Beamish double.

S	Y	N	O	P	S	I	S
W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W

Act 1:- Home of the Scheusters.

Act 2nd:- Green room of the Folly Theatre. **SPECIAL NOTICE**

Act 3rd:- The same.

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Act First.

At rise Hilda is discovered at type-writer.) (Henry Dalton is seated at table down L. smoking a pipe looking over loose sheets of manuscript.

Hilda

(Types a few seconds after curtain rises, pulls sheet out) And there is the final curtain to your latest Drama "Hope Deferred."

Henry

It's finished, Hilda?

Hilda

(Coming down with sheet) Yes, the great play that all America is waiting for is ready now to be submitted to the great managers.

Henry

Let's hope it will have a luckier fate than its predecessor.

Hilda

I hope so, Mr. Dalton, but I like "Her Heart's Desire" better than this one, although this one has the punch too.

Henry

My dear Hilda, if all the managers and critics were of your opinion, my fortune would soon be made.

Hilda

I love "Her Hearts' Desire." I know every line of it. (sighs) If some day I should fulfill Papa's prophecy and become a leading actress, and your play lies on the shelf so long, I shall play it, and make it succeed too.

Henry

I wish that day would come quickly for both our sakes, Hilda. That would be a double joy, to write stuff worth while, and have you interpret it. I would like to go through life like that, Dearest! (Goes to put arm around her waist she eludes him, placing her finger on his lips as he approaches her)

Hilda

No, no, forbidden, remember. (Picks up leaves of manuscript) Let me fasten "Hope Deferred" together. (Places sheet she carries on bottom of others, carries manuscript back to typewriting desk, proceeds to fasten it together) (Knock on door- Henry goes to door L opens it)

Mansfield Muggs.

(Outside door) No madam, I object to being called "Daddy" I am not your daddy, and - (Enters L door, surveys Henry from head to foot) (aside) Ah, the Viper! Humph! He got here before me! (Note Mansfield is a sort of "gloomy Gus" individual of the palmy day type, but should not be burlesqued)

Hilda.

Come in, Mr. Muggs, come in, we're glad to see you.

Muggs

Ah! "If I profane with my unworthiest hand" Humpg. Did you hear me sit on that fat person who addressed me in the hall just now?

Hilda

Yes, who was it?

Muggs

The leading lady of the Stewed Chicken Burlesquers. They landed here in the house this morning, the majority of them called me the "Old Legit" One accosted me as King Lear- a few led by that fat person whom I'm sure was in the original Black Crook called me "Daddy"

Hilda

It is only their fun, I wouldn't mind them.

Muggs

I can't help minding the "fleers and scoffs of the common her." "It is the rash humor that my mother gave me" I am getting more and more like Macready every day.

Henry

Macready. He was the great English Hamlet was he not?

Muggs

Yes, and I am the great American Joe Morgan.

Henry

But he is dead.

Muggs

There the resemblance ceases. I am still alive, Ahem!
(coughs) What is that junk? (Points to MSS)

Hilda

Junk? Why Mr. Muggs, this is a play, a new play by Mr. Dalton.

Muggs

And therefore "Junk" All modern drama is junk.

Hilda

(Firing up) This is nothing of the kind. This is beautiful, this is--

Muggs

Marry - what call you the thing?

Hilda

It is called "Hope Deferred"

Muggs

"Hope deferred" (Groans) an awful title. It will be a frost, The proverb has it" Hope deferred maketh the Heart sick" The rude and ribald ruffians who write the critical review will seize their opportunity to roast. I can see the headlines now "Hope Deferred maketh the public sick" Where did you cop the thing? (to Henry)

Henry

"Cop"? I don't understand.

Muggs

From what did you steal it, from what other play, *COPYRIGHT BY ALLAN BYERS FROM 1913*
what magazine?

Henry

I don't steal, sir. This work is original.

Muggs

(Groans again) Worse and worse. The last spark of hope is gone. Nothing succeeds nowadays that is original. Put "Hokum in thy play--

Henry

Hokum?

Muggs

"Sure fire" stuff. Gags that have been offered to the bonehead public, since the days of Noah" "Tho they make the judicious grieve" they will make the unthinking laugh"

Henry

But I don't want them to laugh.

Muggs

Then they will laugh, that's the irony of fate. They laughed at my death-scene in Uncle Tom, the brutes! However I have no desire to discuss the drama further with any amateur interloper. (Patronizingly waving Henry aside) You wouldn't understand. (Crosses over L)

Henry

I'm afraid not. (aside to Hilda) Does he drink?

Muggs

(turns suddenly) Eh, what's that? Are you talking about me.

Henry

I inquired if you drank.

Muggs

Did you ask "Will I drink" or "do I drink"? Were you actuated by a convivial feeling to tender me your hospitality, or were your words merely prompted by vulgar curiosity?

Henry

Well - I --(Hesitating)

Muggs

It is evidently curiosity about my personal habits. I am not an habitual booze fighter Sir, I'm a periodical - I am sober at times.

Henry

(Produces money, hands bill to Hilda) This is for the last typing Hilda.

Hilda

Don't be in a hurry, I - I can wait.

Henry

Nonsense, why wait? May I call later?

Hilda

Surely. (Gives him, her hand, he takes it)

Henry

(Picks up manuscript) Good after noon Mr. - Mr.---

Muggs

Muggs, Sir, Mr. Mansfield Muggs, (strikes attitude)

Henry

Mr. Mansfield Muggs.

Hilda

I thought you gentlemen had met, living here in the same house.

Muggs

We have passed each other in the corridor and on the stairs, By the way, Sir- what is your - your damned name.

Henry

My name is Dalton.

Muggs

Dalton, eh, I have played several heavy villains by the name of Dalton. There is a particular brutal crook called James Dalton, I hope he is no connection?

Henry

I really can't say. (Exit L)

Muggs

Viper! Viper. When you return again to this Peaceful Eden, and endeavor to insinuate your wriggling loathsome shape. You will find me, Muggs, like Michael the Archangel with his flaming sword, on guard, waving you hence, and crying with trumpet like voice. Avaunt, Serpent, Avaunt. I forbid you entering my Paradise. Ahem! I venture to say Hilda, this embryotic dramatist of yours never wrote a speech like that.

Hilda

No, I hope not.

Muggs

Ah, Hilda, Excellent wench, Perdition catch my soul but I do love thee, and when I love thee not, Chaos is come again. Hilda are you angry with your Muggsy?

Hilda

No, I'm not angry, but very sorry, that you should forget your natural courtesy, and your kind heart, and behave as you have to the gentleman who has just left us.

Muggs

He's I regard him as my rival, my hated rival.

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Hilda

I fear he regards you as a lunatic. You know he's not used to our ways or to us people of the theatre. He don't understand the shop talk, of our little world at all, and when he sees you, a man as old as my father--

Muggs

Eh-

Hilda

(Firmly) As old as my father, exhibit symptoms of jealousy, what must he think of you?

Muggs

How can I help being jealous? As Bill Shakespeare says--

Hilda

"Bill" Shakespeare! "William" would be more reverential Muggsy.

Muggs

The immortal "Bill" says -

"I had rather be a toad

And live upon the vapor of a dungeon

Than keep a corner in the thing I love,

For other's uses!" Ahem- this scribbler has not the "Bohemian" air of most of the lodgers in the rooming house.

Hilda

I think he has known better days.

Muggs

So have the rest of us, else we would not be here. Judging from the careless way he handed you that ten dollars. He is probably stopping here on a bet, perhaps he wishes to breathe the true artistic atmosphere. By the way, my slumbers were seriously disturbed last night. The Loop the Loop sisters next to me, had a mixed ale party and the owner of the sea-cow accused Svengali the hypnotist of practicing on his pet.

Hilda

Why did you leave the theatre so early to-day.

Muggs

Rehearsal was dismissed. The leading lady Miss Livingston had a quarrel with Percy Dusenbury who is to do Romeo, and Percy went into a violent fit of hysterics.

Hilda

A man have hysterics?

Muggs

Well you know he is of the Claude Eclair type, a bundle of nerves.

Hilda

Will they postpone Romeo and Juliet now.

Muggs

I don't know. I applied to Manager Beamish immediately for the job. I told him I had played Romeo forty years ago. I guaranteed that Miss Livingston couldn't give me hysterics, and told him I was all nerve.

Hilda

Yes, and he--

Muggs

He answered, he knew I was "all nerve" and he liked my nerve, but if I didn't have hysterics, the audience probably would. The underlings and parasites around him laughed, as they always do at the manager's jokes.

Hilda

Miss Livingston must have an awful temper.

Muggs

She has, she is the devil and Tom Walker, by the way that reminds me, Miss Livingston and I were talking of you.

Hilda

(Surprised) Of me?

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the same. The point is that we have to make our
decisions in the light of the available information,
and not in the light of what we would like to have.
In other words, we have to take the facts as they
are, and not as we would like them to be.

Now, let's consider another aspect of the law of cause and effect.
This aspect is the "law of cause and effect".
It states that if you do something, it will have
certain effects. These effects may be good or bad.
But the law of cause and effect is very strict.
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Muggs

Yes, she's a very shrewd woman is Miss Livingston, not like most of those society idiots that go into the business with evowed intentions of elevating the drama. She is high and mighty with the manager, the leading actors and so on, but commonly speaking, she is the greatest "bull conn" with newspaper slush writers, and stage hands, that I have ever tumbled up against in my variegated career. Do you know that she and your father have had several extended conversations?

Hilda

Indeed, he never told me.

Muggs

They have, and seeing your father Herr Scheuster and I were great friends. She asked me many questions, I enlightened my lady as far as I could, about his history, and wide experience, She pumped him dry about effective stage business and in Romeo and Juliet and has adopted all his suggestions, and in defiance of the stage director. That's what startled the row today, at rehearsal.

Hilda

Oh, I am sorry. It may end badly for Father. He may be accused of upsetting discipline, and he is usually so reticent. Crippled as he is, there are not many positions, he can fill now. My own earnings with the typewriter are small and our very existence is a precarious one. If I returned to the stage it would have to be with some small obscure traveling company, and then Father and I would be separated. (Scheuster sings outside) some German Folk song as the Obzugsmarsh or the Soldiers' Farewell is humming it as he enters; he is neatly but poorly dressed, in dark clothes he has gray hair rather long pale face and walks with a decided limp, he hums song as he enters)

Scheuster

(With German accent) Ah Hilda, you haf company, that is well. It is a joy Herr Muggs in mein house to find you. Hilda daughter mine, haf you made Herr Muggs welcome.

Hilda

Yes, father.

Scheuster

I haf great news for you both. (shows excitement) What do you think. (Laughs) Ah, you cannot guess what great fortune has happened to me, what mighty thing has happened.

Hilda

What, Father= what-

Scheuster

I haf been discharged, I haf lost my chob. I haf as you Americans say, I have been grand bounced, haf had a can tied to me, kicked from the Folly Theatre out, Ah! (Laughs) Ha, ha, ha. I, Scheuster who played mit Sonnehtal, Janish, Barnay have been fired from my position as property assistant by a man who cannot tell Shiller's Robbers from Jesse James, Is it not a "choke" - Hah? Why don't you laugh, like I do.

Muggs

How did it happen, Ferdinand.

Scheuster

Were you not at the battle today, between Fraulein Livingston and Herr Dusenbury. It was in der parting scene of Romeo and Juliet. Let me see. How does it begin. Help my memory, Hilda child mine, help my memory.

Hilda

"Wilt thou begone? It is not yet near day"- It was the night-
ingale and not the lark"

Scheuster

(Interrupting) Yah! Yah ! Dot is it. Stop right there.

Die Fraulein she got so far as Der Nightingale, when I appeared.
 Dere was no candleabra on the scene, left off by mistake.
 The scene is not complete mitout it. It being a night scene.
 Foots oundt, two borders oundt, Calcium upper L mit blue
 mediums changing to red. So at der Nightingale I come on mit
 candleabra, und dot Dusenbury says. How dare you! Get from
 the stage off mit.you, Raus mit you, you limpy legged Dutchmann.

Hilda

Oh Father-

Scheuster

Yah, what you think of doct, he called your father a limpy
 legged Dutchman. Dot badt, badt actor. But I was avengedt,
 Fraulein Livingsten, she avengd me.

Muggs

Ah, How! How!

Scheuster

She sat on him good and hard.

Muggs

Great! Great! Juliet sits on Romeo, good and hard, good
 business. Yes.

Scheyster

She toldt him he was a puppy, who was gonspiring against her
 success and he told her she was an incompetent cat who had
 broken into the business mit a jimmy. So then she grabbed one
 of der candles from der candleabra und stabbed him in the
 eye mit it. It was awful.

Muggs

Good business, lover's quarrel. Juliet jabs Romeo in eye with
 a candle. That ought to go in Muscatine. I would like to have
 seen it, but I was at the stage door taking a smoke.

Scheuster

The stage hands und der actors took sides in the battle.
 It was terrible. Such a desecration of the actor's art.

Muggs

You were not hurt in the fracas.

Scheuster

Hurt in the what?

Muggs

The Fracas-

Scheuster

I don't know what you mean by "mine fracas" but I fell down and w
 was walked over und now I am fired out of a cannon, discharged
 you call it.

Hilda

(Embraces him) My poor father!

Scheuster

Mein liebes Kinde. The good God must provide for us, until
 I get another "chob" It is strange this worldt. How bad
 luck pursues us. First your Angel Mother died. Und then I met
 with my accident. And could not follow the actor's profession
 any more. They write many plays, many "lame" und "freak"
 plays. Und many crippled mis shapen parts, but damned few
 parts for crippled actors. Oh well! If dot swindler had not
 got away with all my savings of years. Dot robber whom the
 American Law cannot touch, Dot Dalton.

Muggs

Dalton, why that is the name name as the young man who was
 here who writes plays.

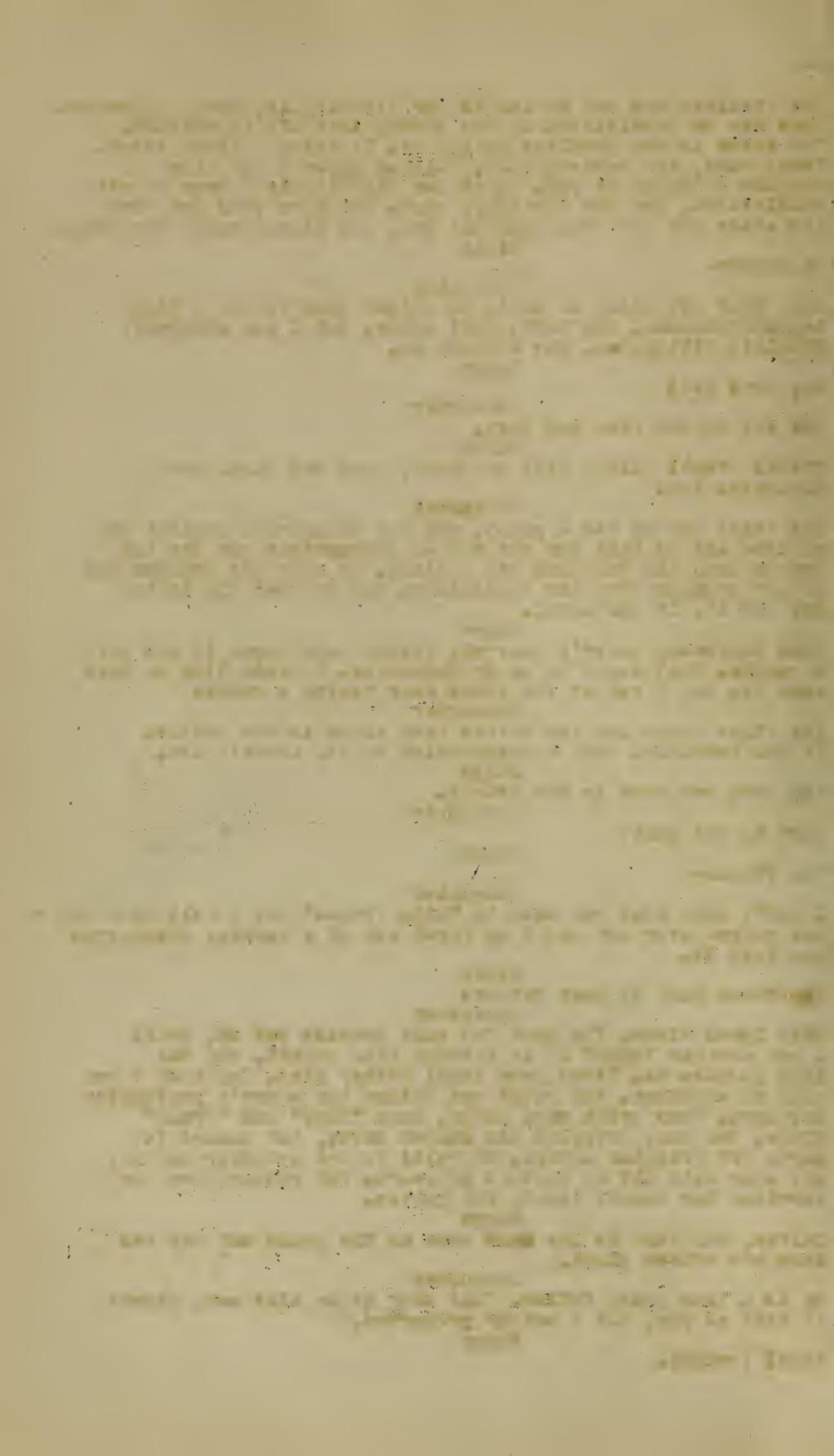
Scheuster

He is a fine young fellow. This oder is an oldt man, almost
 as oldt as you, but - better preserved.

Muggs

Ahem! (coughs.)

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Hilda.

I'll get you something to eat, Father. I'm sure you must be hungry.

Scheuster

I haf' no appetite. (shakes his head) Besides, we haf' but little money. I think I shall stop eating now.

Hilda

What?

Scheuster

Eating so much. Professor Byers says we oldt men eat altogether too much we dig our graves mit our teeth, und when we haf' no teethour graves are dug und dot is all of us. No matter. Here is all I got of this weeks wages, and tomorrow rent due. (Hands money)

Hilda

We have been worse off, Father, see. (Shows bill Henry Dalton gave her)

Scheuster

Ten dollars! Where did you get it?

Hilda

For typing Mr. Dalton's new play.

Scheuster

(Shakes his head) Ah, it is not so good as his first, I am sure. Her Hearts' Desire is a great work, und the managers all refuse it. He sent it to our manager Bamquo Beamish last, I suppose he will refuse it too. Idiot. Hilda!

Hilda

Yes Father.

Scheuster

I don't think that Mr. Dalton has much money. Perhaps that ten dollars is the last money ha-has, eh?

Hilda

Perhaps it is, Father.

Scheuster

You should have refused it. You should have said in your prettiest manner, "It is a pleasure to copy your admirable work, please to accept this, this manuscript, as a compliment from - my father and myself. Mr. Dalton a money compensation would offend me.

Hilda

But it didn't offend me, Father.

Scheuster

My child, you must uphold the dignity of your race. Remember the Scheuster's are of gentle blood, as the french say, Noblesse Oblige.

Hilda

Yes Father. I'll go and fry you some sausage. (exit R)

Scheuster

Ah Muggs my friend, the great tragedy of my life is always before Hilda, my daughter, my pride, My only hope in living. She the last of the Scheuster has to accept money for laboring with her hands on a typewriting machine.

Muggs

You are too sensitive, Scheuster, we in America regard "labor with the hands" as most honorable. (strikes attitude.)

Scheuster

Then Muggs you are not honorable, because I am sure you never did a days work in the last fifty years. Bah, what is the use! Hilda, my Hilda is a born artist and trained to be a grand actress. I trained her, as we are trained at home. Und she has had to descend to "arts base- mechanical"--

Muggs

But not menial, yet--

Scheuster

(In rage) Muggs, How dare you hint at such infamy. Another word, and you from my acquaintance, I will drop.

Muggs

Don't get excited. I won't mention it as you take it that way, although I was going to say--

Scheuster

What were you going to say? (threateningly) Say it! Say it! Say it!

Muggs

Well, I don't want to offend you--

Scheuster

Go on, go on! I insist, I insist that you offend me.

Muggs

Miss Livingston needs a new dresser, some one to help her on and off with her clothes and costumes, er - just in the theatre, and I proposed--

Scheuster

What did you propose, what?

Muggs

Well, seeing that you were willing to work as assistant props, I thought that you wouldn't object to--

Scheuster

To what?

Muggs

To help the lady out, and I proposed you--

Scheuster

You proposed me, to help her on and off with - Muggs haf you gone crazy?

Muggs

No but I will if you glare at me that way.

Scheuster

Me, as a lady's maid, das is gut.

Muggs

No, I proposed you should consult Hilda, and see if she would take the position- it pays well.

Scheuster

(with forced calmness - rising) Stand right where you are.
(Calls) Hilda! Hilda!

Hilda

(re-enters R) Yes Father.

Scheuster

Hilda! Fetch me the sabre I wore at Sedan. My sword, I cut the French man's ear off mit(Smiles at Muggs) Go on laugh! Laugh, or she may suspect my purpose, laugh. (Pokes Muggs.) Laugh! (Hilda exits R)

Muggs

(Forced laugh) Ha! Ha! Ha! What the devil have I got to laugh about?

Scheuster

To show you have courage. I am going to avenge your insult to the Scheusters mit my sword, not here, it will muss the carpet, but in the hallway.

Muggs

What. (retreating, shouts) Awake. Awake. Ring the alarm bell! Murder and Treason. (Picks up chair, holding Scheuster off, Hilda enters with sword the hilt of which is tied up with red-white- and black ribbons, the German colors)

Murder!

Hilda.

What is the matter?

Muggs'

Your father is turning butcher.

Scheuster

He has insulted the Scheuster blood, give me my sabre!

Hilda

No, no, my father calm yourself.

Scheuster

He shall not of you, make a menial, my child.

Hilda

A menial? I don't understand. Explain, Mr. Muggs.

Muggs

Miss Livingston needs a dresser, and I recommended you.

Scheuster

You hear. And in his infamy, he glories. Give me the sword.

Hilda

Quiet, my father. (to Muggs) And would Miss Livingston accept me for the position.

Muggs

She would have, but now that insanity has developed in your family, I have my doubts. However I gave Miss Livingston your address, we are but a few steps from the Theatre, She may call herself--

Scheuster

Und you told her that we lived here?

Muggs

Yes, here. I also told her this building was called the "mad-house" by the neighbors. So go as far as you like with your ravings, They may not astonish her. (Knock on door L U)

(Hilda goes up, opens door)

Florence Livingston

(Enters L U) I am looking for Mr. Scheusters' apartments.

(She is fashionably attired)

Hilda

Come in!

Scheuster

(Bows with dignity) Frau Livingston, it is with pleasure, to my home. I welcome you. Meine Liebe Hilda, a chair if you please, for the lady. (Hilda places a chair for Florence but she does not take it)

Florence

(to Muggs) Hello Muggsy! Why you don't look well.

Muggs

"I am sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

Florence

You really ought to take something for your liver. (Looks at Hilda) I suppose this is your daughter, the little girl I've heard of. (Nods approvingly) Very good, my child do you speak as good English as your father?

Muggs

(Laughs) Ha! Ha! Ha!

Florence

(Turns) What is the matter with you, Muggs.

Muggs

Ahem, nothing! Nothing! I - was just thinking of Dusenbury's "Romeo."

Scheuster

In reply to your question Frau Livingston, Die Fraulein Hilda's English is yust as gut as mine, if not petter. Her mother although she was American was of a cultivated excellent family.

Florence

I am sure Mr. Scheuster could have chosen his wife from no other. (Scheuster bows to compliment.)

Muggs

(Aside) Now she's spreading the salve. "Bull" should be feminine instead of masculine.

Florence

I would esteem it as a favor, Mr. Scheuster if you would consent to have your daughter assist me. I would pay her liberally. Her tasks would be light, her hours short and her refinement would help to maintain the artistic atmosphere I always like around me.

Muggs

Yes, atmosphere is important. That last dresser you had lived on gin. Hilda, I assured Miss Livingston that you didn't drink, yes. You see Miss Livingston my friend, Scheuster.

Scheuster

Freidn no long. (Viciously) Bonehead!

Hilda

Father! (Checking him)

Muggs

He thinks the position of dresser is a humiliating one. Hilda here has acted with much success on the Alfalfa circuit, and I assured him he was wrong. Why Banquo Beamish our manager was a dresser for Rooney the tragedian and look at where he is to-day.

Florence

It will be an advantage for your daughter and yourself to both be in the same theatre, Mr. Scheuster.

Scheuster

But we can't be, I was discharged by Mr. Beamish himself.

Florence

He will take you back. I'll attend to that, he gave Dusenbury his walking papers.

Muggs

Then who - who will play Romeo.

Florence

Banquo Beamish himself.

Muggs

He? Sacrilege! Malediction's and Curses! Oh but he will be awful direful in the part.

Hilda

Miss Livingston will you pardon us, if Father and I consult for a minute.

Florence

(Smiles assent)

Scheuster

But- (Protesting)

Hilda

Come Father, come! (They exeunt R)

Muggs

Banquo Beamish as Romeo. "On Horror's head, Horrors accumulate! Banquo should be called Bunco in this profanation! (Knock on door)

Muggs

Come in!

Henry

(Re-enters L U) (Looks around) Miss Hilda is not in.

Muggs

(aside) Ah- the "Viper" (to Henry) The Lady is engaged at present.

Henry

Will you kindly tell her, I left these oranges and nuts for her. (goes to dresser R)

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Muggs

(Aside) Humph! The first serpent tempted Eve with an apple,
This viper uses oranges and nuts.

Henry

If you'll be so king. (going L)

Florence

(As Henry turns back) By all that's- Why if this place wasn't
called the mad-house, I'd say you were Henry Dalton.

Henry

Mrs Livingston.

Florence

What are you doing here among the Bohemians?

Henry

I live here.

Florence

You? Impossible. Does your father know this.

Henry

I don't think he knows or cares. My existence is of but
little concern to him. His own pursuits are paramount
with him.

Florence

Pursuits. You named them well. "Pursuits" He's always chasing
up some woman, the dear delicious old love pirate. He can't
help it. If he wasn't so immorally wealthy, our sex would
ruin him. He'll get into a tangle some day and be shot like
Stanford White. Don't frown Henry. Think I might have been
your step-mother, only I jilted your father, and married
Livingston. Of course you read how I got rid of him-
Livingston by the Reno route. But what are you doing here?

Muggs

He is writing plays, bad plays, damned bad plays.

Henry

(In temper) What do you know about it.

Muggs

You have not the Shakspearean forehead.

Florence

Shut up Muggs. Don't mind him Henry. He has a disease called
"Hamfatitis" It's common in the business. Those affected
with it play with a hammer constantly. They knock plays that
they have never witnessed, they criticize actors they
never saw. Tell me Henry, did you write "Her Hearts Desire."

Henry

What do you know about that play?

Florence

There's a manuscript of that name in Banquo Beamish's office,
and by a Henry Dalton. I never identified him as you, My
boy, it's great-great.

Muggs

(Groans) Ah! More taffy! That woman would flatter an ourang-a-
tang.

Florence

Why didn't you make yourself known? If Beamish knew you were
the son of your father, he would produce the play immediately.
Your father is quite popular with some managers. He is a
familiar figure at our stage door.

Muggs

Aged sinner! (Hilda re-enters)

Hilda

Miss Livingston I have gained my father's permission and I
will report at the Folly to-night.

Florence

Very well, we will fix on terms then, Muggsy.

Muggs

(With dignity) Madam !

Florence

Guide me down these gloomy stairs, won't you? I'm painfully afraid of the dark.

Muggs

So am I, but to serve you. Ah. "The labor we delight in physics pain." Come- Hilda, I go, but I'll return, and I'll bring you some oranges and nuts.

Florence

Good bye everybody. Good bye Henry.

Henry

Good afternoon Mrs. Livingston! (Muggs and Florence exuent L U E)

Hilda

(Is looking in surprise at Henry) Why, she called you, "Henry"?

Henry

Yes I have met her before. She at one time came within an ace of marrying my father, two months after my mother's death, but luckily for all she jilted him. What brought her here Hilda?

Hilda

To engage a dresser

Henry

A dresser.

Hilda

Yes, she offered me the position, and I have accepted it.

Henry

What - you - you are going to wait on that woman.

Hilda

She seems very kind, and Father has lost his place, I cannot see him want.

Henry

(Passionately) Hilda! Hilda! Why not let me take up the burthen of all three, It will not be a task, but a jay. The kindness of your eyes so full of charity. The sunshine on your hair, the brightest sunshine in the world to me, the whole woman. You- you will make me do great things with your helpful sympathy, and alone, I - can do nothing.

Hilda

You tell me this every day, and you believe it, and I - believe you, but Henry at present my duty lies there with that poor old crippled man, my father, You know he is proud, very proud, why he even resents my help. He is therecrushed now because I have taken this position with Miss Livingston, I love you, Henry, I do love you, I could live on a crust with you and esteem it, the supremest happiness, but I can't forsake the duty God trusts to me, I can't forsake my father.

Scheuster

(Outside, calls) Hilda! Hilda! Child mine.

Hilda

Yes, Father. He calls me, Don't go Henry I will return.

(She exits. Henry turns up to window, looks out. Enter Robert Dalton and Muggs L U E is fashionably dressed, type of old beau)

Dalton

So you're an actor, eh?

Muggs

Yes sir, that is my profession, I am an actor.

Dalton

Profession, Pooh!

Muggs

Sir, what are you?

Dalton

I am a banker.

Muggs

A banker, Pooh! Pooh!

Dalton

The idea of calling acting a profession.

Muggs

Well, wedo, Banking, we call a trade.

Dalton

I could have lived my life without ever entering a theatre.

Muggs

I have lived all my life without ever entering a bank.

But we digress. There is the individual you wished to see.

You will excuse me. I have forgotten the "oranges and nuts"
(exit L U E)

Dalton

(to Henry) Well, sir, so I see you at last, and in damned
disreputable surroundings. I met that cat, Florence Livingston
at the door, and she told me you were here. Are you doing
yourself any good, are you doing me any good, by your
behavior?

Henry

I am making an honest living, and I am not trespassing on
your bounty.

Dalton

Your action is a scandal. You are putting me in a false
light. the clubs have it as choice tutle tattle that I have
cast you out, and you are living by questionable means.
I am perfectly willing to allow you an income to which
your birth, and my position entitle you.

Henry

I want nothing from you sir, I repeat I am self sustaining.

Dalton

You are your mother's son all right.

Henry

I hope so.

Dalton

Other families have skeletons but they are content to hide
them in their closets - ours must be exhibited to the
world.

Henry

I am not responsible for the skeleton. It is of your own
construction. Your brutality towards my mother the last
years of her life, the insults you heaped upon us both. Your
indecent behavior after her death, are still deeply graver
in my memory, but I have never published them to the
world.

Dalton

(Looks around) And this is your home? This poverty
stricken garret.

Henry

No, this is the home of my friends. My room is in another
part of the building. I am visiting here, and you are
intruding.

Dalton

I see evidences of femininity. (Laughs) (Meaningly and
sneeringly) Let me look at the woman in the case. Trot
her out. I may help you to set her up in a more pretentious
establishment. (Hilda and Scheuster appear in door)

Henry

Take care, sir. Two years ago, you outraged my mother.
Today you would insult my wife, and in spite of the blood-
ties between us, Father or no father, you shan't do that
by God you shan't.

Dalton.

You threaten, eh.

Scheuster

No, no, no. He must not do that. He must remember the commandment of the Good God above us all. "Honour thy father and mother that thy days may be long in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." He must not curse you, even were you a viler creature than you are. But I - I am under no restriction and I can tell you a few things, and I can call you a few names, und Gott verdammt mich, I will.

Hilda

(Muggs re-enters bearing letter) Father!

Scheuster

Be quiet Hilda and look at dot man. He knows me und I know him. He iss Robert Dalton a king of finance, who got rich by leading poor devils like your simple Dutch Fader to invest their all in his swindling schemes. He coins into gold the tears of widows und orphans. He iss a robber, a swindler und a thief, whose clever lawyers keep out of jail. He iss not fit to be among honest people. So I put my back on his face, und cry, raus mit you. From my house, I throw you out. (Dalton pauses, Muggs picks up, Dalton's hat from table hands it to him.

Muggs

Here is your hat, and there is the door. (Dalton exits
L U E)

Muggs

Here is a letter for you, (hands letter to Henry) The call boy just brought it from the Folly Theatre, I was about going after some oranges and nuts. (Henry takes letter mechanically)

Muggs

I will go again. (exit L U E)

Henry

(Reads) "Her Hearts Desire accepted. Early production. Call immediately for advance royalties and contracts." Hilda! Mr. Scheuster, do you hear. How fortune has smiled upon me. My play is accepted.

Scheuster

We are glad of your good fortune. So that Robert Dalton iss your father, eh?

Henry

Yes.

Scheuster

I am sorry, very sorry, I wish you had been the son of somebody else. We Scheusters are a very proud race, and a very particular family. (sighs) I'm very sorry that Hilda und I can't know you any more. You are I think a very good young man, und I shall hate to lose your acquaintance, but- (sighs) It is fate. I rely on your honor, sir, not to try to see Hilda without my permission. I won't say "Raus mit you" I only say "Gott pless you, und Goot by." Hilda make your farewells to Herr Henry. I - I (chokes up with emotion) Gott I am miserable, most miserable. (Last line spoken as an aside as he reaches the door) (exit R 2 E) (Henry takes Hilda in arms)

Henry

But it's not to be farewell, Hilda. I will be patient. I will wait. (Hilda who is weeping, buries her face in his breast)

Muggs

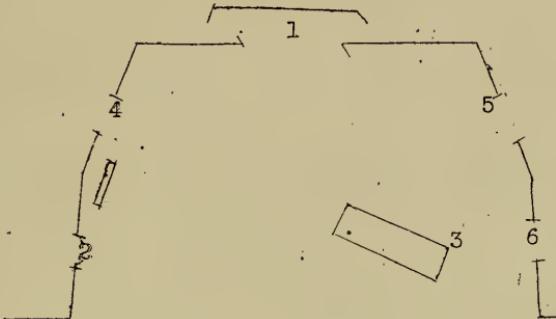
(Enters with paper-bag) I have brought the oranges and - (Sees the picture of Hilda in Henry's arms) Malediction. The Viper has outclassed me. (Sinks in chair)

C U R T A I N.
" " " " "

RIGHT
LEX. BYER

Act Second.

The green room of the Folly Theatre.



E X P L A N A T I O N

(1) Arch supposed to open on stage back by wings with unpainted sides showing. (2) Door with sign "Star room." (3) Sofa. (4) Door with sign "Star Room." (5) Door with sign "Star Room." (6) Door with sign "Star room." A cheval glass up R. above door. Chairs scattered around. Signs, "Keep quiet." "Mind your own business." "No Smoking."

---oooo00000000oo---

19/3
28

At Rise:-- panqu Beamish outside.

Beamish

Remember the same set stands for the last act, so make your changes as quickly as possible and lets get on - let's get on! (Enters C, excitedly followed by Muggs, Scheuster, Henry, all after him talking. Florence sweeps on last, followed by Hilda who carries hand glass, powder box and wraps over arm. Hilda wears apron, as dresser.

Florence

(Pauses at door down L., marked "Star" room.)

Muggs

I want to tell you, Mr. Beamish, I have been forty two years on the stage and never yet has anyone presumed to tell me my business.

Beamish

Well, it's pretty near time someone did, If you play that scene the way you rehearsed it, they'll guy you off the stage.

Florence

Mr. Beamish!

Scheuster

What did that call boy mean by me having two protestants in the right first entrance. (Flourishing paper). I haf them not on my plot. (Exits C)

Henry

Will you listen to me amoment, Mr. Beamish?

Beamish

Sure.

Henry

That last scene is played too fast, the tempo is --

Muggs

(Interrupts) You will please to accept my two weeks notice.

Beamish

Make it shorter if you like. I don't want any fossils around me.

Muggs

Allow me to tell you, Beamish, you are not such a rotten good actor yourself.

Henry

The scene is altogether too fast. Miss Livingston runs her speeches together as if --

Florence

What is that about Miss Livingston?

Beamish

Now Florence --

Florence

Don't "Florence" me. Is this embryo author to back cup me to the manager? Sir, your play is awful, positively the worst I ever had the misfortune to appear in.

Henry

Miss Livingston!

Florence

Shut up! Don't dare to address me! (Exits L. door marked "Star." Slams door in Henry's face)

Beamish

You've done it! you've done it! She's likely to kick over the traces now and not appear to-night at all. The season of your play will be closed before it opens.

Florence

(Sticks head out of door) Hilda! Where are you?

Hilda

Here, Miss.

Florence

Is this the way you are attending to your duties? What am I paying you for? Change my shoes at once. (Hilda exits L. door marked Star.)

Muggs

Mr. Beamish, kindly request your leading lady not to be so realistic in our struggle to-night. I object to being slammed in my front bridge-work by her, even if she is an exile from the four hundred.

Beamish

Talk to her yourself.

Muggs

I will not bandy words with the up-start.

Sheuster

(Enters C., hurriedly) Mr. Beamish, such a misfortune! Such a misfortune!

Beamish

What is it now?

Sheuster

Der trap! Der trap is "busted."

Beamish

What is busted?

Sheuster

Der trap - down which Muggs throws the first old woman in the last act.

Beamish

Oh yes.

Sheuster

I found the ropes parted in four places.

Beamish

What! Who has had access under the stage?

Sheuster

Who saidt any hing about "axes?" Der rope wasn't "chopped" mit "axes" - it just had rotted away.

Beamish

Oh, well, fake it to-day and have it fixed for to-night.

Henry

(Irritated) Mr. Beamish, may I claim your attention about my play?

Beamish

Sure, but we had better get away from the mob. Come into my dressing room or we'll be interrupted every ten seconds. (Exits door R. marked star. Henry about to follow, is grabbed by Muggs)

Muggs

Mr. Dalton!

Henry

Yes!

Muggs

Am I unsatisfactory to you?

Henry

No.

Muggs

You heard what I said to Beamish?

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Henry

Yes.

Muggs

What do you generally think of my creation?

Henry

I can't think. That is, I can't find words to express my thoughts. (Breaks away, exits door R)

Muggs

(To Scheuster) Ferdinand, do you hear? My rehearsal struck Mr. Dalton dumb with amazement. Ah! It isn't the first time I paralyzed an author. The play itself is a good play, if it was only properly cast.

Scheuster

Yah, I always knew it was gut.

Muggs

I ought to have said something to that young man to encourage him. I will. He seems blue. (Knocks on door R)

Beamish

(Inside) What is it?

Muggs

Want Mr. Dalton for a moment, most important.

Henry

(Opens door) What, you again? What is it now?

Muggs

Your play is very good, very good indeed; with a little fixing up, I can foresee a glorious triumph for it. It will be popular and be played everywhere. Tabloid versions will be made by every producing manager who owns a Blickensdorfer typewriter. The cast of sixteen is too large though. I can see my friend Goliah Moore cutting it to four and two, with the lead out of the first three acts, so he can stand on the door.

Henry

Your friend Goliah must be a Philistine. (Exits shutting door)

Muggs

No, he worked for Armour & Co. He broke into the business.

Scheuster, I tremble to-night though Miss Livingston is pulling the lid off Hades. She'll make this thing a failure if she can.

Scheuster

Why - why should she do that?

Muggs

She knows that she is unfitted to the part and Dalton has refused to fall for her blandishments. "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." She made a decided break at him and he tipped her the frozen mitt and the marble heart. I - I ought not to tell you, but she is making Hilda miserable with her jealousy.

Scheuster

What!

Muggs

Her jealousy. She has fathomed the secret that these two young people love each other.

Scheuster

It is not so, my daughter, she does not love him. I told her not to love him. I told her to tear him out of her heart and she obeyed me. Muggs, you are an idiot.

Muggs

I can see a storm coming up. I can hear the dogs of war howling. The crack of doom is impending. So, beware, Scheuster, beware!

Everybody in this production is miscast - Livingston's part should be played by a young girl - like Hilda. I don't like to say anything about myself - but I could just eat up the part Beamish is going on for.

Scheuster

Muggs, you should be in a padded cell.

Muggs

Do you realize if this play fails the Folly Theatre will go to smash? Dalton's father, that old scoundrel has organized a conspiracy to make the play fail too, on account of the quarrel with his son and perhaps he is the one who has worked upon Livingston to abuse Hilda.

Scheuster

Abuse Hilda? That must stop und right away - quick! (About to knock on door L)

Voice

(Outside C) Scheuster! Oh! Scheuster? Where the devil are you? Are you going to let me place this junk all by myself?

Scheuster

(Pauses) Nein! Nein! I am coming - I am coming. (Exits C)

Muggs

(Goes over to door L., listens) Hu,ph! Miss Livingston still scolding. (Goes over to door R. listens) Aha! Banquo Beamish! Still boozing! If he keepsit up, he will be souzed to-night. Ah! (Goes to up C) "Now mischief! Thou art afoot, Take thou what course thou wilt."

Still, I can't help worrying about that salary for the week after next. I wonder if I get it. (Exits C)

Florence

(Enters from door L, Hilda follows) I don't want you arguing with me. I tell you I wouldn't put the rag on my back.

Hilda

But surely, Miss Livingston, the bad fit of the gown ism an error of your modiste and no fault of mine.

Florence

It is your business to find out about these things in time. That's what I pay you for and not to have you slouching around making eyes at that puppy Henry Dalton all the time.

Hilda

You are unjust Miss Livingston to accuse me of neglecting my duties and I won't allow you to insult Mr. Dalton in my hearing.

Florence

What is this?

Hilda

A declaration of the truth, Madam, and an assertion of my dignity as a woman. I want you to bear in mind that even your dresser has some rights you are bound to respect.

Florence

Indeed, you were glad enough to get the position.

Hilda

I was. I didn't know it entailed humiliation and insult. I performed its duties religiously and felt I ws earning an honorable livelihood and assisting my poor father to carry the burden of our mutual support and your treatment of me kind at first has gradually degenerated into the torture accorded by a mushroom tyrant to a helpless slave.

Florence

Take care, or I'll dismiss you

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Hilda

I have already dismissed myself, madam. I am as good as yourself in most things your superior. I despised you while serving you. Your allusion to Mr. Dalton has earned for you - my pitying contempt.

Florence

You poor little fool. I suppose you will go to Henry Dalton with your story. Perhaps you have hopes of marrying him. The son of the most notorious rogue in New York - this disinherited aristocrat whose future as a dramatist, I can make or mar to-night. (Muggs re-enters)

Hilda

God who gave him his talents will dispose of his future. The efforts of an imperfectly trained actress who has already seen her vogue can count but for little.

Florence

So my meek little kitten has claws, eh, and can scratch?

Hilda

If you mean me as a kitten, I have possibly learned to scratch from the older cat I have been so closely associated with, since I entered your employ.

Florence

you Dutch devil! Down on your knees and beg for pardon for every word you have said, or I'll strangle you. (Grabs Hilda by throat, forcing her to knees, shaking her)

Muggs

(Who has stood up at back, listening, shouts) Here! Stop this! Help! Murder! Police! (Knocks on door R) Banquo! Come out! Miss Livingston has another spasm! (Beamish half dressed with one boot on, the other in his hand and followed by Henry, re-enters from R, with exclamations. They tear Florence and Hilda apart)

Muggs

Ladies, if you are ladies, remember that you are ladies! Florence, calm yourself. It is your "Muggsy" speaks. You know I have always loved you.

Florence

(On sofa) Get away from me, you galvanized mummy. I hate all of you! (Shrieks and goes into violent hysterics) Keep away, keep away! (Screams, beats feet on floor, finally collapses, groaning. Scheuster enters C. Everybody excited)

Beamish

Oh, this is terrible, terrible! What is to be done? I never saw her as bad as this. Phone for the doctor!

Muggs

Phone for the whole board of health. Scheuster, get some water. (Scheuster exits L)

Beamish

Brandy will be better.

Muggs

I'll get your whiskey. (Exits room R., re-enters with demijohn just as Scheuster reappears with pitcher of water)

Scheuster

Here is the water!

Muggs

The whiskey generally comes first,

Scheuster

What is to do mit the water?

Muggs

Throw it over her and if she comes to, we'll all take a drink.

Scheuster

Oh, very well. (Lifts pitcher.)

Florence

(Rising) You Dutch idiot! Don't you dare!

Muggs

Florence, here's looking at you. I knew you were shamming. If you could act as well on the stage, as you do off, you might get by. (Drinks from demi-Jphn.)

Florence

Beamish! Kick all these people out of the theatre at once, - everyone of them, if you want a performance to-night.

Beamish

Florence!

.

Florence

I mean it. Keep that author off the stage - out of my sight! I won't have him around. He gets on my nerves.

Beamish

But it's Mr. Dalton's play and --

Florence

I don't care --

Henry

Give the lady her way, Mr. Beamish. I have seen her rehearsals. I don't want to witness her performance.

Muggs

oo! That's a good one. Have a drink with me. (Offers Henry demi-john)

Beamish

But Muggs plays an important part and --

Florence

Cut him out altogether. He only drives money away from your theatre.

Beamish

(Aroused) See here, I am about sick of your nonsense and tantrums. You've been raising merry blazes around here long enough and --

Florence

Don't take that tone with me or I'll close your house.

Beamish

You do and I'll sue you. You know the amount of money I've invested in this thing. If you ruin me, I'll have satisfaction, I'll sue, you, madam, I'll sue you.

Florence

Sue and be --

Muggs

(Shouts) Don't say it - don't be profane. Remember, there are gentlemen present.

Florence

You'll sue, will you? I need just that sort of advertising. Go ahead and Sue. I'll give you the chance. Here, take your old part, take it - take it! (Rams it into Beamish's face) I won't play to-night. I wont play for you again, I'm going home. (Exits door L)

Beamish

Well, (sinks on sofa) this is the limit. I'm ruined, Muggs, tell the stage manager to dismiss rehearsal of last act and instruct the people to report at any office when they get dressed for the street.

Muggs

Wait a minute, wait a minute!

Beamish

What's the use of waiting, the mischief is done? The play can't go on without a leading woman. Talk sense. Have you ever heard of Hamlet being done without Hamlet?

Muggs

When I was with Bob Sherman's Players, I heard and saw strange things, but no matter. Why not put on someone in Miss Livingston's part?

Beamish

You're insane. Who could get up in these lines, (Holding up part) in this time and give a performance?

Henry

The girl who is already up in them.

Beamish

What girl?

Scheuster

He means mein Hilda - mein daughter.

Beamish

That girl! Livingston's dresser!

Scheuster

Her dresser no more. She is about to take her rightful place as artiste - und save your house from being closed - you from financial ruin und all she asks is a contract for Frau Livingston's salary.

Beamish

You infernal Dutchman, have you become a lunatic too?

Scheuster

If you call her father names, Herr Beamish, Hilda will boost her salary more.

Beamish

What? Trust this production to a rank novice?

Scheuster

Hilda is of rank, high rank, but she is not a novice. She has appeared lots mit me und I am the companion of "Link" of "Sonnenthal." We learn our art, not guess at it, like you Yankee Hams.

Hilda

Don't, father, don't!

Scheuster

Ah, but he gif's me dot tired feeling.

Muggs

My friend Scheuster tells the truth. For one so young, Hilda has lots of stage experience. I know she hastalent. I - I am willing to take a chance on her.

Beamish

You? I'd like to know where you come in?

Muggs

In this production, I come in on the first act; by the way, I don't like that entrance, Mr. Author. I would suggest you to --

Henry

Mr. Beamish, give Miss Scheuster a rehearsal. You can loose nothing by it,

Beamish

You consent to that?

Henry

more, I beg, yes, I'll stand on my contract and demand it. If she fails, I'll get the money to reimburse your expenditure on the whole production and make you a present of the play in the bargain.

Beamish

you're on! Here Miss, is the part. Come to the stage. We'll begin at once.

Hilda

(Refusing it) I do not need the part, sir, I know it.

Henry

She knows every line of the play.

Beamish

How is that?

Henry

She inspired "Her Heart's Desire", sir. It would never have been written but for Hilda.

Beamish

Well, come, come! The time is getting short! (Beamish exits C)

Scheuster

Gott bless you, Hilda! Fortune be mit you. I - I come by and by. I - I am too nervous yet. "Muggsy" you - you take Hilda. (Passes her to Muggs, but Henry anticipates him, leads Hilda off C)

Muggs.

Ahem! "Take Hilda." Hilda is already "taken." (Exits C) (Scheuster falls on knees in attitude of prayer)

Florence

(Enters from L. door, dressed as for street). (Looks at Scheuster, inquiringly) What are you doing there? Where are the others?

(Sharply) Do you hear me, Scheuster?

Scheuster

(Rises) You disturb me, Frau Livingston. I am a prayer uttering.

Florence

A prayer, eh? Well, cut out your superstitions and answer me when I speak to you. Where are the others?

Scheuster

Gone back to the rehearsal.

Florence

Rehearsal? Why, how can they rehearse without me?

Scheuster

They will rehearse better without you than with you.

Florence

What impertinence is this?

Scheuster

No impertinence, but the truth. They are honored. They are blessed, because the Firmament Dramatic is to be enriched to-night, by a star, and they will be present at her birth.

Florence

What do you mean?

Scheuster

Her Heart's Desire, goes on to-night in spite of you, Frau Livingston.

Florence

Impossible. Why who can take my place?

Scheuster

The woman for whom the part was written - my Hilda! My Little Star.

Florence

What, I'll soon end this. I'll break up this rehearsal, I'll --
Scheuster

You will do nothing of the kind. You will not go on that stage. You will not leave this room. Not if I have to take your throat between my fingers and choke the life out of you. (The last with fierceness) So you will keep quiet silence -! Silence! (Backs Florence down stage.) Hilda is speaking! Hush! Hush!

Hilda

(Outside as if speaking lines of part) "How different everything is now, from everything before. Music means what it never did. Life has leaped into blossom for me. Everywhere there is color and radiance that I have never seen. Ah, dear, the sunshine that falls upon your head spreads over the world."

Scheuster

(To Florence) Do you hear? Dot iss my child - my Hilda - my little star! Opportunity is knocking at her door. We will escape from our dungeon of poverty with a golden key und when she gets ready, Hilda will marry the man of her heart und they will live happy ever after, mit Scheuster, the oldt Dutch Father - looking over and protecting them from danger, just as I am doing now! So don't speak! Don't even breathe! (Standing menacingly over Florence who is on sofa) (Andante music)

C U R T A I N

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Act Third.

Same set. The same night.

At Rise:-- Loud applause heard off stage. Work wooden clapper effect. Enter Hilda C. in fancy costume with cloak. She hurries, running to dressing room L., exits. Enter following closely, Muggs and Scheuster)

Muggs

Don't worry, Scheuster, old man! It's going great! Six curtains after that act and the great scenes to come. It's a knock-out, a knockout, old man. Hilda is a sure fire success. Now, if Beamish don't let the third act down as he is most sure to do, it will be a veritable triumph.

Voice Outside

Scheuster! Scheuster! Where are you?

Scheuster

Here! Mr. Clancy! Here!

Voice

Get a gait on you and come and clear away this junk.

Scheuster

Yah! Yah! I'm coming! I'm coming! (Nervously limps off)

Henry

(Enters, about to go to Hilda's room. Muggs intercepts him)

Muggs

Great, my boy, great! (Grabs his hands, shakes them effusively) Your play is excellent. Jim Mc Closkey never wrote a better one. How did you like my performance? I trust I carried out your ideas in my portrayal.

Henry

The truth is, Mr. Muggs, I didn't see your scene. The newspaper men were inger viewing me at the time and --

Muggs

Oh, those "scarling scribes", eg? The irreverent roasting reptiles. Did they say anything Henry the play. The complimented me mifMuggsbut were enthusiastic enough about Hilda. God bless her. She's a success with all, public and press. The newspapers are more inquisitive about Miss Livingston's defection than anything else.

Muggs

(Mysteriously) push, she is here. (Points R)

Henry

Here?

Muggs

The stage door-tender disobeyed orders and let her in. She is busy hatching some deviltry now to queer the show, but I have my eye on her. Trust me!

Henry

Surely!

Muggs

You may; we have been enemies, you and I --

Henry

I wasn't aware of it.

Muggs

Oh yes, for a long time. I regarded you as a "viper." I called you a "viper" - ahem! behind your back repeatedly, but I have forgiven you that and we are friends. I don't cherish animosity.

Henry

I'm glad to hear it, Mr. Muggs.

Muggs

I am glad to have this opportunity of talking to you alone. You have made a great mistake in allowing Beamish to cast himself as Major Blackadder. If your play should turn out a "flivver."

Henry

A flivver". What the devil is a "flivver?"

Muggs

Achilling frost, a failure.

Henry

Oh!

Muggs

It will be due to Beanishes' Blackadder. I should have been the Blackadder. The part was just built for me.

Henry

You think you could have played it?

Muggs

(Litigiously) Played it? Damn me, sir! I am "Blackadder." Not but what Beamish and I are friends. Yes, we started in the business, three of us together. Poor Mort Grandby was the other. He was the worst actor of us all, worse than Beamish. Well, Beamish went up and Grandby went down.

Henry

And you?

Muggs

I? Ahem! I accompanied Grandby. You see, I could not crook the pregnant hinges of my knee or with a honied tongue unblushingly flatter those above me, Beamish, however --

Henry

I beg your pardon, Mr. Muggs, but I haven't seen Mr. Beamish all evening. Have you?

Henry

I don't understand.

Muggs

He has been drinking "healths five fathoms deep." His troubles to-day started him. I had been administering aromatic spirits of Ammonia to sober him up so he can get through Blackadder.

Henry

Get through!

Muggs

Yes, don't worry. He'll play it badly of course. He couldn't be any worse drunk than he would be sober.

Henry

(Distractedly) Oh, this is madness, madness. What's to be done?

Muggs

That scorpion, that Livingston woman is with him now. She is possibly undoing the good effects of my prescription. He had better knock on his door and find out how he is. Blackadder appears at the beginning of the act. Now, don't get excited. Be calm, like me.

Henry

Oh Hell! (Shakes Muggs off, goes to door R, exits)

Muggs

Curses! Curses! Curses! (Exits after Henry door R) (Closes door-) (Scheuster enters C., goes to door L., knocks on it)

Scheuster

Hilda! Hilda! Are you almost ready? It is your oldt fadde that is speaking, come oudt! Come out, my little star, und gif

me a kiss. (Hilda opens door. Scheuster embraces her, leads her down stage) Clancy has excused me for a little while. He is good, he is kind, he knows I want to see my Hilda - my little Star.

Hilda

And did I get through all right, my father?

Scheuster

(Indignantly) Get through? Through? Why you - you made them stand up and take notice.

Hilda

And I look the part?

Scheuster

You look like an angel. You look like an angel. Und how do I look mit my overalls? Not much like the father of an angel, eh?

Hilda

Ah, Father, if I am successful; perhaps Henry will write a play for you and you won't have to wear overalls.

Scheuster

Und then we will have so much money we won't know how to spend it all. No, my child, you need not worry. You keep on, as you have begun und in nineteen or twenty years you will be a very good actress - fit to appear before a Berlin audience - er - one moment - you have not enough rouge on your left cheek. Attend to it before you go on - und there is too much white on your chin - attend to that, ts it not a big house? I look at him through the peephole of the curtain und the stage manager fine me one dollar, but it is worth it to know they are all there to swell the triumph of my little Star. Ah, my child, you are trembling. You must not tremble.

Hilda

But Father, I felt so frightened.

Scheuster

You had no reason to be frightened. Your oldt fadder, he was not frightened. Louf! What did I care? I was cold - cold - like the iceman.

Hilda

But remember, father, it is not all over yet. The great scene is to come and I might fail.

Scheuster

Fail! Fail! (Strikes attitude) In the bright dictionary of youth written by Daniel Webster, George Cohan und Bill Shakespeare, it says "Put screw your courage to the sticking plaster, und there is no such word as fail." Go fix your face and your fadder will lead you to your further triumph. (Hilda exits L) (Henry re-enters followed by Beamish. Beamish is very drunk and is being assisted by Muggs who is trying to quiet him. Florence enters last. She is highly amused)

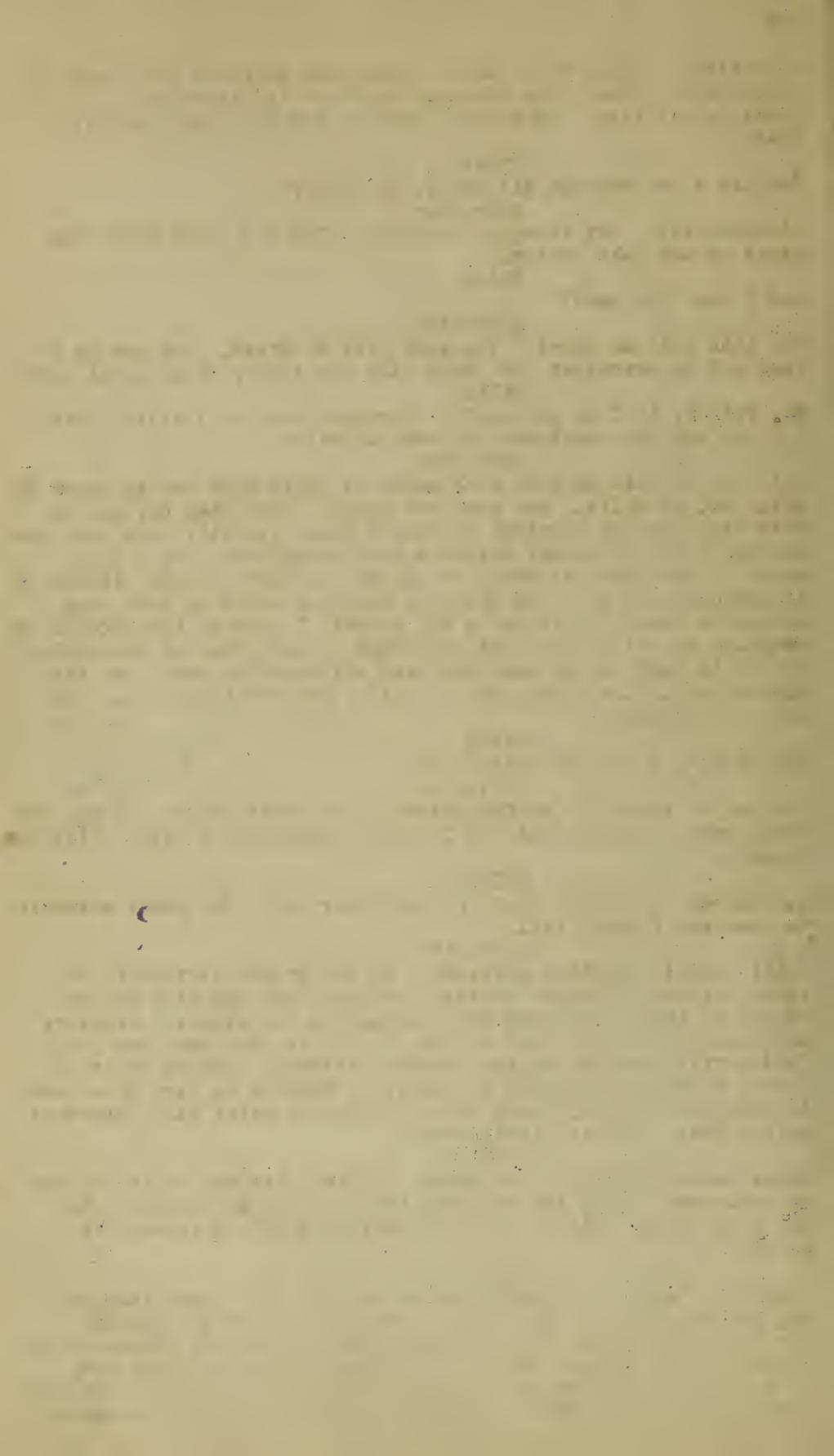
Beamish

Wazza mazzer wiz you? you author feller? Are you trying to run my business? Thish ish not your theatre, but my theatre. Let the play go on. Let it go on! (Falls in chair, goes half to sleep)

Muggs

Wake up! Wake up! (Slaps Beamish on back and shakes him) Brace up, Banquo, or your name will be "Puncce," (Florence laughs) Don't you laugh, you "shearing snee-devil" I mean "Sneering she devil." This is your work! (To Beamish) Beamish! Old man, it's Muggs talking to you. Come to yourself, won't you, old fel low? Think of me, won't you? Think of little Hilda, you damned

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old idiot, wake up!

Scheuster

Mein Gott! Mein Gott!

Henry

Courage, Friend Scheuster, all isn't lost yet.

Scheuster

But what can you do? Der performance must end right here and --

Henry

I shall go before the curtain and tell the audience the truth,
that Beamish is drunk.

Florence

Do you hear, Banquo? He says you're drunk.

Beamish

Who's drunk? (Rousing himself) Who's drunk?

Florence

He's going before the curtain.

Beamish

Who is? Who is? It's my curtain! He shan't go before the curtain hic! (Hic coughs) Give me another drink. (Mumbles to himself)

Florence

So the Her Heart's Desire and the Little Star end in the fiasco.

Muggs

And all your fault, Beamish's condition is all your work.

Florence

I own it, I confess it and glory in the deed,

Scheuster

Ah, you confess the crime?

EX-BYERS
Murderess, very well, you shall be punished. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth and as this blow will kill me, und kill my Hilda's happiness for it I will haf your life. You badt - you worst of women!

Florence

Hold that madman's we has already threatened to kill me.

Henry

(Grapples with Scheuster. Hilda enters) Herr Scheuster, calm yourself, all is not yet lost. Here, take this and take care of it. I was going to put it in yours and Hilda's hands to-night when the performance was ended. But as it seems over now, take it. (Puts envelope in Scheuster's hands)

Scheuster

(Faintly) What is it? you read it, Hilda. (She has come to him)

Hilda

Why it is a cheque for twenty thousand dollars ad signed Robert Dalton..

Henry

It is restititution from my father to yours, Hilda, Dad and I buried the hatchet to-day and he is out in front to-night assisting in my play's success and applauding Hilda's every move. The play even if interrupted to-night will go on to-morrow, even if we have to buy a theatre outright.

Muggs

It will not be interrupted to-night. (Commences to pull off Beamish' boots)

Omnes

What are you doing?

Muggs
making up for Blackadder.

Omnes

What?

Muggs

The part was just built for me. (Pullson boots, Tears off Beamish's chapeau, puts it on)

Muggs

Scheuster, help me off with his coat. (They pull off Beamish's uniform coat, he falls down) Roll him in his room and give me his part. I'll wing it. (He puts on coat, wraps cloak around him. Henry hands him part after putting Beamish off R)

Scheuster

But your own part? How are you going to double it?

Muggs

Double it? I shall wear a beard and my overcoat and who in blazes is to know me?

Voice Outside

Third Act.

Muggs

Ring up! Come, Hilda! Come! (Goes up C)

Scheuster

(To Hulda) Go, my little Star!

Henry

Let's call her Our Little Star,

Scheuster

Yah! Yah, my son, Our Little Star. (Hilda is C. Scheuster L.C. Henry R.C. Florence down R)

C U R T A I N

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Note:-- Beamish is in costume, semi-military. Boots, uniform coat, a chapeau with plumes and a black cloak. Muggs can extract much comedy while stripping Beamish and putting on these things.

---oooooooooooo---

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